

Naugatuck Cultural Council
Environmental Initiatives Committee
Minutes

December 11, 2012

Town Hall, Hall of Burgesses, 229 Church Street, Naugatuck

Present: Suzanne Flores, Felipe Flores, Vanessa Vowe, Les Williams, Mathew Richard, Len Yanielli, Melissa Leonard, Ed Carter

Meeting called to order by Felipe Flores at 6:05 p.m.

Suzanne Flores volunteered to take notes.

Felipe asked all present to share a community experience that made you feel good.

- Ed Carter mentioned the tree lighting ceremony and helping someone out. He gave the example of a man who called to ask about putting in a sidewalk so his wife could get around the neighborhood in her wheelchair and another neighbor who asked for a bike path.
- Les Williams talked about our activity in October celebrating the ethnic variety of Naugatuck, where we saw various dancers, bands, food and crafts.
- Suzanne talked about the excitement of a man passing by who was intrigued by the green tomatoes and the recipe for salsa verde.
- Melissa also enjoyed the Celebration.
- Vanessa said she felt more connected to people being on this council.
- Len informed us that last week was the initiation of the CT Freedom Trail at Gunntown where there is a lot of history. The CT Council on Tourism takes note of these trails. Ed added that there is a woman from NYC who stays at a hotel in Southbury and writes a newsletter about the area. She always calls asking for news of what's going on.
- Mathew said he has been trying to meet people and doing a lot of volunteering, such as The Thanksgiving meal at St Michael's and a career day talk at the middle school. This led to information about various web sites for volunteer possibilities. Mayor Mezzo's web site, The Elks Club, The Senior Center, a link on the town's web site to St. Michael's NEON, Naugatuck Social Services Network.
- Felipe talked about his Tai Chi class sponsored by the Whittemore Library where
- Brian, who teaches a yoga class at the Senior Center, adds his expertise and Holly, who practices therapeutic touch, adds hers.

Last but not least, we talked about the Environmental Initiatives Committee. One of our goals is to bring the committee together through the creation of a community garden.

Another idea, proposed by Melissa, is to label the grates in town to let people know that everything that poured down those drains goes into the river. She has been trying, unsuccessfully, to contact a man in Beacon Falls who completed a drains project there.

Apparently it is not so simple. Ed talked about how the town has been trying to discover where exactly all the drains feed into. Some are marked white so that they can be plotted through aerial photos. Another tactic is to blow smoke through them and if people complain of smoke in their homes it indicates that the drains are connected where they shouldn't be. He also mentioned that Fred Agee, the "map guy", may have a lot of information.

One more idea is to set up "rain gardens;" these are buffer areas where rain is absorbed by the garden, helping to prevent flooding.

Felipe asked where we should start.

- Apparently, there is a garden at the Senior Center and the director says they would be willing to have help.
- Felipe also asked about other areas in town. Les proposed that we make a list of possible sites.
- Melissa thought the Senior Center was a good place to start small.
- Ed added that St Francis students might be able to help.
- Les thought we should develop a criteria for students interested in volunteering.
- We agreed to open communication with Harvey at the Senior Center and involve 2 other people.
- Lena Warren has been invited to speak about community gardening at the next meeting of the Cultural Council on January 14th.
- Rather than have our own meeting it was decided that we combine groups and attend that meeting, especially since the focus was on community gardens.
- Ed said he would talk to Harvey the next day.

Melissa made a motion to approve the minutes of the Oct. 23rd meeting, and Ed seconded it. All approved.

Melissa made a motion to adjourn at 7:10 p.m., and Ed seconded it. All approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Flores